

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Testimony presented before the Joint Committee on Appropriations and Public Health

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Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Senator Harp, Representative Ritter, Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Public Health and Appropriations Committees. My name is Katharine Kranz Lewis and I am Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Public Health. I am here today to provide you with testimony regarding the disbursement recommendations from the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board of Trustees Annual Report for 2012. The Department of Public Health and Commissioner Mullen appreciate the opportunity to support the recommendations. These recommendations include the use of evidence-based programming identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (or CDC) in their Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs document.

Evidence-based practice recommendations suggest that the more support a smoker has, including cessation counseling and appropriate pharmaceuticals, the more likely their quit will be successful. The Department of Public Health has helped more than 4,000 Connecticut residents each year through community cessation programs and the telephone quitline. In addition to those who are able to successfully quit, others have been able to reduce their tobacco use. Participants in the smoking cessation programs have told us how great the programs are, that they have been able to stop smoking with the help they received, and that their quit was even easier than they expected because of the ideas and support provided through our funded programs.

Further upstream, mass media campaigns can be effective tools for discouraging tobacco use, changing youth attitudes about tobacco use and slowing rates at which young people take up smoking. Currently, more than one in five high school students is susceptible to beginning tobacco use. The success of the CDC national media campaign that shows real people ravaged by tobacco use sends a powerful message to those who are already using tobacco and those who might begin to use tobacco.

The Department of Public Health appreciates the opportunity to comment on this proposal. We look forward to continuing our work to improve the public's health by eliminating tobacco use among Connecticut residents.



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